## Desired Conditions Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore October, 2006

Desired conditions articulate the ideal future conditions that the National Park Service is striving to attain at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. They provide guidance for fulfilling the park's purpose and for protecting the park's fundamental resources and values on a Lakeshore-wide basis.

<u>Ecosystem Management:</u> The National Park Service is a leader in resource stewardship and conservation of ecosystem values. The dunes, forests, and aquatic systems are managed from an ecosystem perspective, considering both internal and external factors affecting visitor use, environmental quality, and resource stewardship. Management decisions about ecosystems are based on scholarly and scientific information. Resources and visitation are managed in consideration of the ecological and social conditions of the National Lakeshore and surrounding area. Park managers adapt to changing ecological and social conditions and are partners in regional land planning and management.

<u>Natural Resources (General) and Diversity</u>: The resources and processes of the National Lakeshore retain a significant degree of ecological integrity. Natural wind, sand, and water processes function as unimpeded as possible. Management decisions about natural resources are based on scholarly and scientific information and on the National Lakeshore's identified fundamental resources and values. Park resources and values are protected through collaborative efforts with neighbors and partners. Visitors and employees recognize and understand the value of the park's natural resources. Human impacts on resources are monitored and harmful effects are minimized, mitigated, or eliminated.

Biologically diverse native communities are protected and restored when possible. Particularly sensitive communities are closely monitored and protected. Endemic species and habitats are fully protected; nonnative species are controlled and native species are re-introduced when conditions allow. Genetic integrity of native species is protected. Threatened and endangered species are protected to the greatest extent possible, and are generally stable or improving. Natural fire regimes are investigated and supported where possible.

<u>Air Quality</u>: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is a Class II area under the Clean Air Act (this designation allows for limited amounts of new air emissions). The air quality of the National Lakeshore is enhanced or maintained.

<u>Water Quality and Quantity</u>: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore water quality and quantity reflect natural conditions and support native, administrative, and recreational uses. Outstanding water quality is protected and preserved.

<u>Wildlife Management</u>: Natural wildlife populations and systems are understood and perpetuated. Natural fluctuations in populations are permitted to occur to the greatest extent possible. Natural influences are mimicked if necessary. The National Lakeshore works with neighbors and partners to achieve mutually beneficial goals related to wildlife.

<u>Cultural Resources (General)</u>: Cultural resources are identified, evaluated, managed, and protected within their broader context. Management decisions about cultural resources are based on scholarly and scientific information, fundamental resources and values, and consultation with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and with American Indians, as appropriate. The historic integrity of properties listed on (or eligible for listing on) the National Register of Historic Places is protected. Visitors and employees recognize and understand the value of the park's cultural resources. Human and natural impacts on cultural resources are monitored and harmful effects are minimized or eliminated.

<u>Historic Structures</u>: The character of historic structures is preserved and rehabilitated to retain a high degree of integrity. Whenever possible, adaptive use of historic structures for park needs is considered before building new infrastructure.

<u>Cultural Landscapes</u>: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore's cultural landscapes retain a high degree of integrity (cultural landscapes reflect human adaptation and use of natural resources and are often expressed in the way land is organized and divided, patterns of settlement, land use, systems of circulation, and the types of structures that are built).

<u>Archeological Resources</u>: Archeological resources within the National Lakeshore are identified and preserved (archeological resources are significant remains of past human activity and records documenting the scientific analysis of these remains; archeological features are typically buried but may extend above ground; they are commonly associated with prehistoric peoples but may be products of more contemporary society).

<u>Visitor Use and Experience:</u> Visitors from diverse backgrounds can experience a range of opportunities consistent with the purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values of the National Lakeshore. Most visitors understand and appreciate the purpose and significance of the National Lakeshore and value their stewardship role in preserving natural and cultural features. They actively contribute to the park's preservation through appropriate use and behavior. Park programs and services are accessible to all and conflicts between different user groups are minimized.

Visitor use levels and activities are consistent with preserving park purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values, and with providing opportunities for recreation, education and inspiration. Management decisions are based on scholarly and scientific information. When such information is lacking, managers make decisions based on the best available information, adapting as new information becomes available. Regional recreation opportunities continue to be coordinated among agencies for public benefit and ease of use.

<u>Visitor Information, Interpretation, and Education:</u> Interpretation and education services at the National Lakeshore facilitate intellectual and emotional connections between visitors and park resources. Interpretive programs foster understanding of park resources, resource stewardship, and build a local and national constituency. Outreach programs through schools, organizations, and partnerships build connections to the park. Curriculum and place-based education inspire student understanding and resource stewardship. Visitors receive adequate information to orient themselves to the park and possible opportunities for a safe and enjoyable visit.

<u>Viewsheds</u>: The visual quality of the natural vistas and cultural landscapes provide park visitors with an immediate and lasting sensory experience that strongly conveys the character of the National Lakeshore. Key scenic vistas are identified and protected. Park managers work with neighbors, local communities, and land managers to preserve scenic values.

<u>Night Sky</u>: The naturally dark night sky is preserved. Artificial light sources within and outside of the park do not impair opportunities to see the moon, stars, planets, and other celestial features. Park staff and partners continue to work with local communities to encourage protection of the night sky. To the greatest extent possible, the NPS works within a regional context to protect the quality of the night sky and the experience thereof as a scenic vista.

<u>Natural Sounds</u>: Natural soundscapes are preserved and sounds of modern society are minimized. Visitors to the National Lakeshore have opportunities in some parts of the park to experience natural sounds.

<u>Facilities and Services</u>: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore facilities and development are the minimum necessary to serve visitor needs and protect park resources. Visitor and administrative facilities are as compatible as possible with natural processes and surrounding landscapes, aesthetically pleasing, and functional. Historic structures and properties are adaptively used when practicable. Commercial services in the park are limited to those that are necessary and based on park purpose. In general, commercial services are provided outside the park, if possible, rather than inside. Housing is managed to ensure an adequate level of protection for park resources, visitors, employees, and government property, and to provide necessary services. Adequate response (equipment and people) for visitor, resource, and facility protection, search and rescue, fire management, and safety is available. Decisions regarding park operations, facilities management, and development at the National Lakeshore—from initial concept through design and construction—reflect principles of resource conservation and sustainability.

<u>Park Accessibility</u>: New and renovated facilities are designed and constructed to be universally accessible. Visitors with limited mobility have opportunities to experience the dunes, surrounding sands and waters, historic structures and cultural landscapes, and enjoy representative portions of the backcountry.

Relations with Private and Public Organizations, Adjacent Landowners, and Governmental Agencies: The National Lakeshore is managed holistically as part of a greater ecological, social, economic, and cultural system. Positive relations are maintained with inholders, adjacent landowners, surrounding communities, and private and public groups that affect, and are affected by, the National Lakeshore. The National Lakeshore is managed proactively to ensure that NPS values are effectively communicated and understood.

Relations with American Indian Tribes: The NPS recognizes that the Sleeping Bear Dunes area has long occupied a prominent position for American Indians in the Great Lakes Region and that the National Lakeshore is included in the Ceded Territory of the Treaty of 1836. Park staff work to ensure that traditional American Indian ties to the National Lakeshore are recognized, and strive to maintain positive, productive government-to-government relationships with tribes culturally affiliated with the park. The viewpoints and needs of tribes are respected, and issues that arise are promptly addressed. American Indian values are considered in the management and operation of the park.

<u>Wilderness</u>: Potential and Recommended wilderness areas retain their wilderness characteristics and values. Visitors find opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. Wilderness areas are affected primarily by the forces of nature, and signs of people remain substantially unnoticeable.

<u>Land Protection</u>: The National Park Service works actively with private landholders and reservation of use and occupancy holders to ensure that the National Lakeshore resources and values are protected and preserved.

<u>Research:</u> The National Park Service works with partners to learn about natural and cultural resources and associated values. Research priorities for the National Lakeshore are aligned with its purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values.